

**HB 1518-S - DIGEST**

(DIGEST OF PROPOSED 1ST SUBSTITUTE)

Finds that historically most death sentences imposed in Washington have been reversed and rarely imposed. The legislature further finds that it is in the state's interest to determine whether the state's capital punishment system is applied fairly and proportionally, and whether the continued allocation of substantial time, resources, and moneys spent on capital trials and appeals is warranted.

Creates a death penalty task force for the purpose of conducting a review of the existing death penalty statutes and court rules to determine the following: (1) The uniformity of decision making by prosecuting attorneys in terms of charging defendants with aggravated first degree murder and the criteria used in such decisions;

(2) The impact of race, ethnicity, gender, and economic status on the likelihood of a defendant being charged with aggravated first degree murder;

(3) The administration of Washington's death penalty law since the enactment of chapter 10.95 RCW to determine whether it is applied randomly or arbitrarily;

(4) The costs associated with capital trials and appeals;

(5) Whether there are revisions to existing statutes and court rules that, if implemented, would decrease the likelihood of an inappropriate imposition of the death penalty; and

(6) Evidence concerning cases in which a defense of severe mental disorder, significantly impairing a defendant's ability to appreciate the wrongfulness of his or her actions, could have been offered had such a defense been available and how that defense might have affected the outcome of cases.

Directs the task force to report its findings and recommendations to the governor, Washington supreme court, and appropriate committees of the legislature by January 1, 2008.

Appropriates the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2007, from the state general fund to the house of representatives for the purposes of this act.

Appropriates the sum of fifty thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, from the state general fund to the house of representatives for the purposes of this act.

Appropriates the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2007, from the state general fund to the senate for the purposes of this act.

Appropriates the sum of fifty thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, for the fiscal year ending

June 30, 2008, from the state general fund to the senate for the purposes of this act.